

FEBRUARY, 1943

NINEPENCE

# THEATRE WORLD

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**1943**

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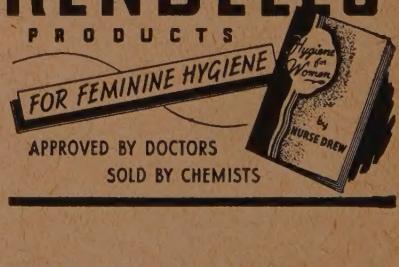
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# Theatre World

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Edited by Frances Stephens

February,  
1943

Over the  
Footlights

**T**HREE seems little left to be said on the burning question of Sunday openings. The daily press has given the subject a great deal of space from all angles, and it is at least certain that the meeting of members of the acting profession convened at the Saville Theatre on January 15th will go down in theatrical history as a strange, if all-star, performance.

This magazine views this difficult problem from the playgoer's angle. As such there seems no possible reason for not putting aside the antiquated law in question; for quite obviously the intention of saving the people from being contaminated by the doubtful morals of the theatres on the Sabbath, no longer holds good. All seem agreed on that, and on the absurdity of the present situation when no actor can don a wig or a bit of make-up for any charity performance on a Sunday.

**F**ROM that point, however, has arisen such a divergence of opinion within the profession, that it is indeed difficult to see the wood for the trees. Out of all this morass of heated argument, however, some things seem clear. The opposition, in our opinion, is misguided in insisting that Sunday theatres would inevitably lead to a seven-day week. Proper safeguards could and would be taken as in any other trade or profession, and managements on the whole, would, we feel sure, not be unmindful of their duty in this respect. Nor would Sunday theatres interfere with the opportunity to worship: in fact it can be said that for members of touring companies Sunday openings would provide that opportunity, whereas now the Sabbath with its sordid journeying from place to place, is the most godless day of the week. After

all there would be no Sunday *morning* performances.

**N**EVERTHELESS the sincere opinions held by the opposition must not be ignored, and for that reason it seemed to us there was a far too arbitrary air about the Equity meeting at the Saville, especially in the refusal to consider amendments to the resolution to be put before Parliament and the refusal to hold a secret ballot (which, however, we are glad to say was not persisted in). The acting profession must, by its very nature, be largely individualistic, and since most members feel that to set aside the law for the duration of the war would be but the thin end of the wedge with general Sunday openings following for all time, they are entitled to register a vote.

In the course of the meeting it was revealed that most actors and actresses would be only too delighted to give non-commercial performances for the Services and war workers on Sundays, and in support it was mentioned—what is undoubtedly true—that prevailing prices for theatre seats, especially in the West End, are quite beyond the resources of serving men and women. So that the platform's insistence that Sunday theatres, commercially run, would be such a boon for the fighting forces needs closer inspection.

**T**HREE the subject must be left. Some where in all this there may be a compromise: difficult to see at the moment. One can quite understand Parliament being somewhat puzzled if she is called upon to re-consider the matter. It is but one corner of our domestic problem, but sufficient to show it will not be too easy to plan the Brave New World! F.S.

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P603A

# New Shows of the Month

## "Arsenic and Old Lace"

**T**WENTY-FOUR corpses, thirteen of them within hailing distance, so to speak, are good measure for an evening's entertainment. But there is much more than that to split your sides in this latest American comedy, which has taken London by storm.

There is, for instance, Lilian Braithwaite's superb artlessness as Abby Brewster, the more dominant of the sisters whose unfortunate kink a dozen harmless gentlemen lived—or rather died—to regret. These charming lavender ladies were much respected in Brooklyn, and no one guessed they were in fact as crazed as their brother Teddy, who, thinking himself Teddy Roosevelt, was at all odd times of the day and night charging up the stairs into battle or blowing his bugle, or setting off for the Panama in full tropical kit. But so it was, and Abby and Martha were, unfortunately, no amateurs when it came to mixing a palatable dose of poison, as the bodies in the cellar bore witness.

Craziness you will gather is the keynote, nicely rounded off when Jonathan, another mad Brewster, turns up, looking just like Boris Karloff, his face having been lifted to that likeness by his surgeon pal when under the influence of drink. And really it is not at all surprising to see these two dragging yet another corpse through the window, an intruder corpse, incidentally, which causes a lot of trouble before the evening is over.

It is left to Mortimer Brewster, a nice sane young dramatic critic, to try and drag out and at the same time hide the skeleton in the family cupboard, and in the end all is well, for one could hardly expect the police to believe there were a baker's dozen of corpses down in the cellar of the respectable Brewster home.

Only the most obtuse could fail to be vastly amused by this absurd piece of nonsense. It is in addition produced by Marcel Varnel with true American slickness, and the acting is brilliant. Lilian Braithwaite and Mary Jerrold naturally dominate the play in their dual role of "arsenic and old lace," and with what naïvete and kindly innocence they accomplish their dark deeds. Other excellent performances come from Frank Pettingell as Teddy Brewster, Naunton Wayne as Mortimer Brewster and Edmund Willard as Jonathan. Eileen Bennett brings considerable feminine appeal as Mortimer's young lady, and Martin Miller contributes his quota of oddity with a sure touch as Dr. Einstein, Jonathan's surgeon friend. In the cast also are Clarence Bigge

**Arsenic and Old Lace**—Strand, Dec. 24th.

**The Romance of David Garrick**—St. James's, Dec. 29th (Followed by *King Lear*, Jan. 26th).

**The Desert Song**—Prince of Wales, Jan. 16th.

as The Rev. Dr. Harper, George Dillon as Officer Brophy, E. J. Kennedy as Officer Klein, Arthur Mainzer as Mr. Gibbs, Cyril Smith as Officer O'Hara, Frank Tilton as Lieutenant Rooney and Wilfred Caithness as Mr. Witherspoon.

F.S.

## "The Romance of David Garrick"

**M**MR. WOLFIT'S production of this workmanlike play by Constance Cox brought a touch of much-needed romance to the West End at a time when sophistication was the keynote in most theatres. The play is, of course, on a familiar theme, the story of David Garrick and Ada Ingott, and if the plot is perhaps a trifle too slender, the authoress knows her characters, and has an expert touch with the atmosphere of the period.

Donald Wolfit appeared as the famous actor, who enacts a drunken scene with such good effect in order to alienate Ada, whom he discovers, too late, is the unknown girl with whom he has fallen in love. Mr. Wolfit seemed much at home in the part and proved himself expert in the changing moods. Rosalind Iden was an appealing Ada, though the role did not demand a great deal from this talented young actress. Other good performances came from Clare Harris as Mrs. Pritchard, Eric Maxon as James Quin, H. Worrall-Thompson as Charles Macklin and Iris Russell as Kitty Clive. These old staggers were, we felt, a little romanticised, but a little whitewashing is sometimes a pleasant thing. Patrick Crean appeared as The Hon. Edward Farren, villain of the piece, Richard Lyndhurst as Captain Barry, and Eric Adeney as Simon Ingott, Ada's self-made father. The play was charmingly staged.

When this is in print Mr. Wolfit's next production, *King Lear*, will be at the St. James's.

F.S.

## "The Desert Song"

**L**ATEST comer to the now long list of revivals of popular musicals is James Shirvell's presentation of *The Desert Song*

(Continued overleaf)

## New Shows of the Month

(Continued from previous page)

Song at the Prince of Wales Theatre. This should prove a popular choice with its lively tunes, strong action and romance. Harry Welchman plays his original part of Pierre Birabeau (alias Red Shadow), and is in excellent voice. Eleanor Fayre is a charming Margot Bonavalet, and the Azuri of Phyllis Baker is a vivid piece of work. Comedy is in the able hands of Frederic Bentley with many a topical gag, and Helen Barnes is an attractive Susan.

F.S.

## Norman Marshall's Company

THE Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust, who have already done so much for the drama, have contributed still more in launching Norman Marshall's Company which was due to open at the Cambridge Arts Theatre on Monday, January 25th, with *Uncle Vanya* by Tchekov, to be followed later by *The Gay Lord Quex* by Sir Arthur Pinero; *Frolic Wind* by Richard Pryce; *The Double Dealer* by Congreve, and Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman*. New plays will also be produced from time to time.

The Company will be based on Cambridge, and after the first six weeks will visit Liverpool, Oxford and Bristol (if the Theatre Royal is open by then). The Old Vic Company, now at Liverpool, will visit Cambridge during the absence of the Resident Company.

Norman Marshall's Company includes Vivienne Bennett, Joan Swinstead, Nadine March, Enid Lindsey, Frith Banbury and Harold Scott. The Company will be placed under contract for a guaranteed six months and paid whether working or not, so that adequate time can be given to the production of each new play, thus avoiding the rush production inevitable in the ordinary weekly repertory. When on tour with plays already produced at Cambridge, new productions can be rehearsed at leisure.

One of the foremost creative minds in the English Theatre, Norman Marshall, has been responsible for a long list of notable productions. These include *Victoria Regina*, *Parnell*, *Oscar Wilde*, *Of Mice and Men* (all of which began at the Gate Theatre, which Marshall directed with such success from 1934 to 1940, and were then transferred to the West End). His Gate Revues set a new standard for witty, intimate revue, the *Gate Revue of 1938* breaking the long run record for the Ambassadors when transferred to this theatre. His latest production, *The Petrified Forest* at the Globe, marks his return to the theatre after an absence of two and a half years, first in the Army and then on the war-time staff of the B.B.C.

## AS WE GO TO PRESS

LINNIT and Dunfee are presenting *Brighton Rock*, Frank Harvey's adaptation of Graham Greene's famous novel. Richard Attenborough will play the part of the 17 year old gangster Pinkie, in this murder story set against a pre-war background of Brighton race gangs, and Hermione Baddeley is returning to the "straight" theatre after her long success in intimate revue. Dulcie Gray will be seen as the pathetic little waitress called Rose. Produced by Richard Bird, the play opens at Blackpool on February 15th and comes to the West End after a short tour.

\* \* \* \* \*

**T**OM ARNOLD'S revival of *The Vagabond King*, with Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth, will open at Blackpool before coming to the Winter Garden in mid-March.

\* \* \* \* \*

**J**OHN MILLS is back again in *Men in Shadow* at the Vaudeville, which reaches its 200th performance on February 8th.

\* \* \* \* \*

**J.** B. PRIESTLEY'S new play, *They Came to a City*, dealing with an ideal post-war community, opened at his native city, Bradford, on January 26th, and will come to the West End after a provincial tour.

\* \* \* \* \*

**I**N the production of Emlyn Williams' adaptation of Turgenev's *A Month in the Country* opening in the West End in a week or so, another actress will play Peggy Ashcroft's part, as Miss Ashcroft has injured her ankle in a taxi-cab accident.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A**FTER a very successful sixteen week tour, Bernard Delfont presented the new Walter Ellis farce *Sleeping Out* at the Piccadilly on 27th of January. In the cast are Gene Gerrard, Gus McNaughton, Ellen Pollock, Buena Bent, Douglas Stewart and Elizabeth Hunt.

\* \* \* \* \*

**T**HE eighty year old melodrama *The Streets of London* by Dion Boucicault, which was recently presented by the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Orpheum, Golders Green, opened at the Cambridge Theatre on the 28th of January. The cast includes Wilfred Lawson, Oriel Ross, The Aspidistras, Graeme Muir, Nuna Davey, John Nicolson and Betty Fleetwood. The producer is Maxwell Wray.

\* \* \* \* \*

**B**ERNARD SHAW'S *Androcles and the Lion* will be the next production at the Arts Theatre, where it will open on Tuesday, 2nd February. Produced by Alec Clunes, the cast will include Denys Blakelock, Patricia Laffan, Geoffrey Dunn and Wilfred Fletcher.

\* \* \* \* \*

**T**HE record breaking Walter Ellis farce *A Little Bit of Fluff*, which ran for over three years in the last war, is to be presented by Hiller Finton and Richard Afton at the Ambassadors Theatre on Thursday, 4th February. Henry Kendall, Chili Bouchier, Olga Lindo and Christopher Steele will be in the cast.

\* \* \* \* \*

**T**HE new Richard Tauber musical romance *Old Chelsea* will be presented by Bernard Delfont at the Princes Theatre on Wednesday, 10th February. As well as playing the leading part, Tauber has written the music. With him will be seen Carole Lynne, Charles Hawtrey, Nancy Brown and Betty Percheron. Additional musical numbers for *Old Chelsea* have been written by Bernard Grun. The book is by Walter Ellis, lyrics by Fred Tysh, dance arrangements by Lydia Sokolova and the production is by Edward Stirling.



Lilian Braithwaite as Abby Brewster, Mary Jerrold as Martha Brewster and Edmund Willard as Jonathan Brewster in an amusing moment from the play.

## Arsenic and Old Lace

Scenes from Joseph Kesselring's screamingly funny comedy at the Strand, which will be the subject of a pictorial supplement in this magazine next month.

(Left) : Eileen Bennett as Elaine Harper and Naunton Wayne as Mortimer Brewster.

(Below) : The Irish policeman, Officer O'Hara (Cyril Smith *left centre*) gives a long recital of the plot of his play which sends the murderous Jonathan to sleep. Mortimer Brewster sits gagged and on the right is Dr. Einstein (Martin Miller).



# Whispers from the Wings

BY  
LOOKER ON



John Vickers.

HUGH SINCLAIR

THE day I looked in at St. Martin's to have a chat with Hugh Sinclair was the day of the sensational "Sunday openings" meeting at the Saville. All the same I had scarcely expected to find Mr. Sinclair so moved. The truth is, having until then met him only casually, I had judged him by that nonchalant manner and hat-at-jawty-angle air he usually carries in public. In fact I thought of him in terms of those somewhat irresponsible if delightful characters he has been wont to play.

That, however, is not Hugh Sinclair. If you have seen *Claudia* you will have glimpsed him more nearly in David Naughton. He has the same thoughtfulness and kindness, and an underlying seriousness that belies the twinkle in his eye.

\* \* \*

I soon perceived that I must let him get the subject of Sunday openings off his chest. Having been at the meeting myself I too had a few things to say! Mr. Sinclair and his wife, Valerie Taylor, are strongly opposed to Sunday openings. "Valerie and I," he said, "hold great store by our Sundays, the only time our little family can call its own. But for weeks now we have thought about it, trying to be disinterested and fair. The other Sunday we took a walk around the West End just to get an angle on the sub-

ject. There were, of course, scores of service men and women about, but equally there were scores of seats at 8/6 or so available in the cinemas; proof indeed that West End theatre prices are beyond the pockets of vast numbers of the forces. Nothing, however, would give me greater pleasure than to play in Sunday performances of *Claudia* at intervals free for the services, and I am sure I am speaking for the rest of the company."

And so we got back to *Claudia* and away from the theatre's most thorny problem. Mr. Sinclair has spent a long time on Broadway in the past, playing many parts with the Theatre Guild, and I was eager to hear about his impressions of theatre-going on the other side of the Atlantic. "American theatre-goers take the drama more seriously, so it seems to me," was Mr. Sinclair's opinion, "and that goes for the playwrights too." I asked him why American plays, particularly comedies, are proving so successful over here. "Because they are good plays, nothing more," was his ready reply. "You can sense it when you act in them. They somehow play themselves. Take *Claudia*, for instance. Pam and I find a new angle on our parts in almost every performance, and that takes all the drudgery out of acting, you know."

Mr. Sinclair spent a very happy and instructive time in America. "It's grand, though to be playing in England now," he said, "and much to my own surprise I find I have no strong desire to return. In fact I indulge in many dreams about the future of the English theatre. How I should like to see a return to the days of the actor-manager, and what could one not do with a long-term policy in a theatre like the St. Martin's." Anyway, it looks as though *Claudia* will provide a "long-term policy" of many months to come, and that it will be a long time before Mr. Sinclair can fulfil another dream—to have a part opposite his wife in the right play. Of course, they have played together in plays before (*Skylark*, for instance), but never "opposite" in the strict sense.

It was time now for Mr. Sinclair to make up for the evening performance, and I had a feeling he would be glad at curtain fall that night; for his mind was still pre-occupied with the Saville Theatre meeting; I could see it in his eye.

**Save Your Waste Paper — and help the War Effort**



OWEN NARES as Alan Squier, CONSTANCE CUMMINGS as Gabby Maple and HARTLEY POWER as Duke Mantee.

# "*The Petrified Forest*"

AT THE GLOBE THEATRE

AFTER seeing Robert E. Sherwood's gripping play, one wonders why we have waited so long for an opportunity of meeting Alan Squier, Gabby Maple and Duke Mantee in the flesh. If, however, till now it has not been possible to cast the play so perfectly, then the delay has been well worth while. Constance Cummings gives the performance of her career with a sincere and sensitive rendering of the part of the little American girl who is both tough and idealistic as befits her French origin. Nor has Hartley Power ever bettered his performance as the gangster with a heart, or Owen Nares his rendering of the man who personified the world disillusionment of 1934.

What can be said of the stars can also be said of the strong supporting cast who one and all bring an air of realism to the fantastic situation which develops in the remote gasoline station in the Arizona desert.

That there is food for thought as well as excellent and thrilling entertainment in Mr. Sherwood's play goes without saying. We cannot have too many American plays of this calibre. H. M. Tennent, Ltd., and Henry Sherek are to be congratulated on their decision to produce *The Petrified Forest* over here, as is Norman Marshall for his masterly direction of the English version at the Globe, which should be high on the list of plays that must be seen.

SCENES and FRONT COVER STUDY by JOHN VICKERS

(Left) :

Gramp: Well, my friend, when you talk about pioneering you're talking about something I can tell you a few things about.

L-R: Peter Albrecht (Linesman), Paul Parsons (Gramp Maple) and Paul Erickson (Linesman).



THE action takes place in the afternoon and evening of an autumn day in 1934. The setting is the "Black Mesa Bar-B-Q," a gas station and lunch room at a lonely cross-roads in the East Arizona desert, U.S.A. Jason Maple is the proprietor and with him his daughter Gabrielle (Gabby) helps in the bar, and Gramp Maple, his father, an old man whose thoughts are for ever preoccupied with the tough pioneering days of his youth.

Gabby's mother, who is French (Jason having married when serving in the last war), we learn, soon tired of the barrenness of these parts and returned to her own country, where Gabby's hopes and ambitions were always turning; for France she considers is her spiritual home.

Into the lunch room come sunburned odd travellers and the telegraph line men working nearby, whose conversation is clearly coloured by the political unrest of those days of world depression and the interest aroused by the Russian experiment.

We meet Boze Hertzlinger, an athletic young man with no definite opinion of himself, who has a job at the filling station and who has fallen heavily for Gabby without so much as getting much response from her. The moment, however, when he succeeds in making some headway, Alan Squier walks in, and thereafter Gabby's life takes a new direction.

Alan Squier is about thirty and not at all the sort of man one would expect to meet in the Arizona desert. His clothes, if shabby, are well cut, and he brings with him a poorness and diffidence that betoken

(continued page facing.)

(Above centre) :

Gramp: You'll never get Gabby to be respectable. Never in all this world.

The forthright Gabby (Constance Cummings) has a few words with her father. (Nicholls as Jason Maple, right).

(Left) :

Boze: What's that you're reading?

Gabby: You wouldn't like it.

(Robert Beatty as Boze Hertzlinger)



(Above) :

Boze: You're going to love me, Gabby.  
You're going to love me a lot.

Alan Squier (Owen Nares) arrives at the lunch room and interrupts Boze's lovemaking.

intellectual and a lifetime spent in gentler and more civilised surroundings. Gabby serves him with a meal, and before long Gramp Maple is telling him with obvious relish about the notorious gangster, Duke Mantee, who is said to be heading their way, which subject inevitably brings the irrepressible old man back to the rough old days and Billy the Kid, the "killer" who once shot at and missed him.

Alan draws Gabby into conversation, and when she learns he is a writer (of but little achievement, however), she becomes expansive.

(continued next page.)

(Above, centre) :

Gabby: Do you live around here?  
Squier: No. My last host of the road reached his own ranch about ten miles back and didn't ask me in. I had to continue on foot.

(Right) :

Gramp: Like to see a picture of that Duke Mantee.

Squier: My God! Six killed! Did he do all that?

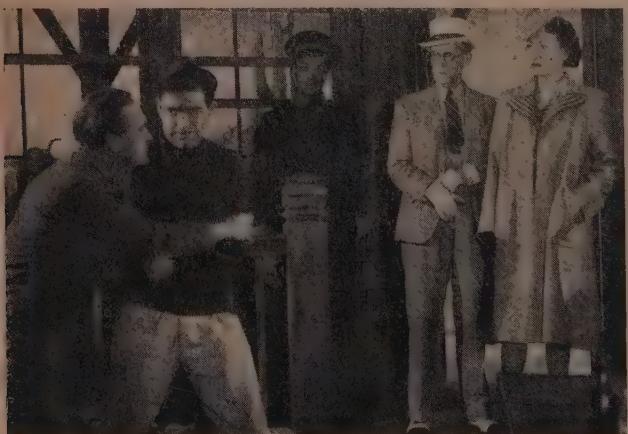


(Left) :  
*Gabby*: Want some coffee?

*Squier*: Will it mix with the beer?

*Gabby*: Oh, sure. Coffee will mix with anything.

*Gabby* begins to be interested in the stranger from the road.



Alan Squier though now penniless has visited all the places she longs to see, and knows the poetry she loves understands art and French civilisation. She tells him about her mother in Bourges and the English edition of François Villon's poems she sent "à ma chère petite Gabrielle." Alan persuades her to read some of her favourite verses, and then comes his own revelation of himself as disillusioned man who has lost purpose in life—a literary failure and "gigolo" who married for money. Gabby, her mind afire, cannot be persuaded that disappointments could lie ahead for her as she shyly shows Alan her secret attempts at painting. He is obviously impressed. Soon she is calling him Alan, and naively suggesting they should go to France together. Alan banteringly resists all her fine plans for giving him Boze's job and waiting for the money Gramma has willed her. He cannot, he says, retrace his steps in life for he belongs to the "in-between age,"—the vanishing race of intellectuals, and that probably the petrified forest in the desert down the road is the most suitable haven for him.

At the end of their long and delightful talk it is clear Gabby has fallen in love. Alan rises to go.

(continued next page.)

(Above, centre) :

*Herb*: All I got's two bucks. Will you treat me for the thirty cents?

*Gabby*: I'll take back two bottles of beer. That'll make it even.

Gabby knows how to handle her customers. Meantime she has given Alan some of her paintings to look at.

(Don Avory as *Herb*.)

(Left) :

*Boze*: You thought you could pay with a kiss, did you?

Boze makes to throw Alan out just when the Chisholms arrive. (Douglas Jeffries as Mr. Chisholm, Joyce Kennedy as Mrs. Chisholm, and Earl Cameron as Joseph, the chauffeur).

*Right):*

Gabby: I'm not afraid!

Boze: Oh, yes, you are. You think I'm something terrible, and you've got to keep away from me. But I'm not so bad, Gabby. I'm just a big guy with a good heart and plenty of hot blood.

thinks he will never see this charming and fresh-minded girl again and is moved to ask for a goodbye kiss. An enraged Boze bursts on the scene and when it transpires Alan has no money to pay for his meal, the angry young man proceeds to throw him out, just at the moment a Mr. and Mrs. Chisholm, a wealthy couple motoring through Arizona, come through the door. Gabby seizes the opportunity to beg a lift for Alan, at the same time giving him from the till his "change" in the shape of a dollar.

(continued next page.)

*(Below):*

Jackie: This is Duke Mantee, folks. He's a world famous killer, and he's hungry.

The arrival of the gangsters. *Left:* Raymond Mander as Ruby and Hartley Power as Duke Mantee. *Right:* Miki Iveria as Paula, the Mexican cook, and Harry Ross as Jackie.





(Left) : *Apache Beer*

Jackie: Quiet, Pepita—quiet. We aren't going to do you any harm. All we're going to ask you to do is to cook something. You wouldn't mind that would you, Pepita?

(Below) :

Squier: Let there be killing! All evening I've had a feeling of Destiny closing in.

Squier comes back and is kept a prisoner with the rest. The moment before the curtain of Act I.



Boze, alone with Gabby, resumes his love making, and Gabby, her mind unsettled and bewildered after Alan's visit, is on the point of succumbing, when in walks "Jackie," a cheerful looking gangster, carrying a sub-machine gun, followed by "Ruby," armed with another machine gun and sawn-off shot gun, and Duke Mantee, the "killer" the whole country is pursuing. About Alan's age, he speaks in low, calm and not unkindly voice, but carries an air of grim hopelessness about him.

The gangsters order food and drink at the point of the gun, and only Gramp seems unafraid—and even excited—at the arrival of these desperate men. A little later Alan

rushes in to warn them the bandits are about, and is forced to sit down with the others. Thus the situation at the end of Act I: Alan, elated, as though destiny had caught up with him, raises his glass as the curtain falls.

In Act II the tenseness grows. The Duke, we gather, is waiting for his "girl friend," Doris, to turn up, and is willing to risk everything to keep that date. Alan, meantime, stimulated by the fantastic situation and copious drinks becomes more voluble and entertaining every minute. Boze, overwrought, tells Gabby in public how much he loves her, and Gabby

(continued page 16.)



(Right) :

Duke: Yeh—that's true. . But what has it got me? I've spent most of my time since I grew up in jail, and it looks like I'll spend the rest of my life dead. So what good does it do me to be a real man when you don't get much chance to be crawling into the hay with some dame?

Mrs. Chisholm: I wonder if we could find any hay around here?

Boze: He got me in the hand.  
Boze makes a vain effort to get hold of a gun.  
Right: The Chisholms and their chauffeur are unceremoniously ushered back into the lunch room.

(Left) :

Squier: Would you mind passing me that rucksack that's on the bench beside you?

Duke: What do you want with it?

Squier: I want to get out my life insurance policy.



(Left) :

Gabby : Alan! If you're going away, I'm going with you—wherever it is.

Squier : No, Gabrielle. I'm not goin' away, anywhere. I don't have to go any farther. Because I think I've found the thing I was looking for....



in turn tells Alan how she nearly gave in to Boze, and then tells Boze she loves Alan. Into the midst of all this self-revelation step the Chisholms just at the moment when Boze seeing an opportunity, leaps at Ruby's gun. He is too late, however, and is shot in the hand for his pains.

The Chisholms, indignant at the hold-up, are also forced to sit down and presently Mrs. Chisholm, infected by the unnatural atmosphere, adds her quota of confession to the others, revealing how she has loathed her life with her staid husband, and how much she understands Alan, and that

(continued page 17)

(Below) :

Jackie : It was Doris. She snitched. The

always snitch!

The terrified legionnaires tell Duke Mantee his pals have been caught and have betrayed them.

(The legionnaires, L-R, Tony Marshall, Don Avory and Gwyn Nichols. Standing, James Smart as Pyles.)





*Squier:* It's an inspiring moment—isn't it, Gabrielle? the United States of America versus Duke Mantee.  
(The troops close in on the gangsters and the shooting begins.)

even in Duke Mantee she glimpses a man who might have given her more happiness.

At last Alan's plan is formulated. Unknown to Gabby, he asks the Duke to kill him just before he leaves. The proceeds of his insurance policy are to go to Gabby to fulfil her dream of going to France. The Duke agrees to this quixotic request: there seems an understanding between these two; the disillusioned intellectual and the

desperate gangster, both products of an age gone wrong.

The tempo increases when Jason Maple and his fellow legionnaires arrive and tell the Duke that Doris has betrayed him. Presently, with lights extinguished, the inmates of the lunch room are flat on the floor, while Mantee and his men engage in a shooting match with the U.S. troops who are closing in on them. All barriers down, Gabby and Alan talk



(Above) :

Squier: It almost restores in me the will to live—and love—and conquer.

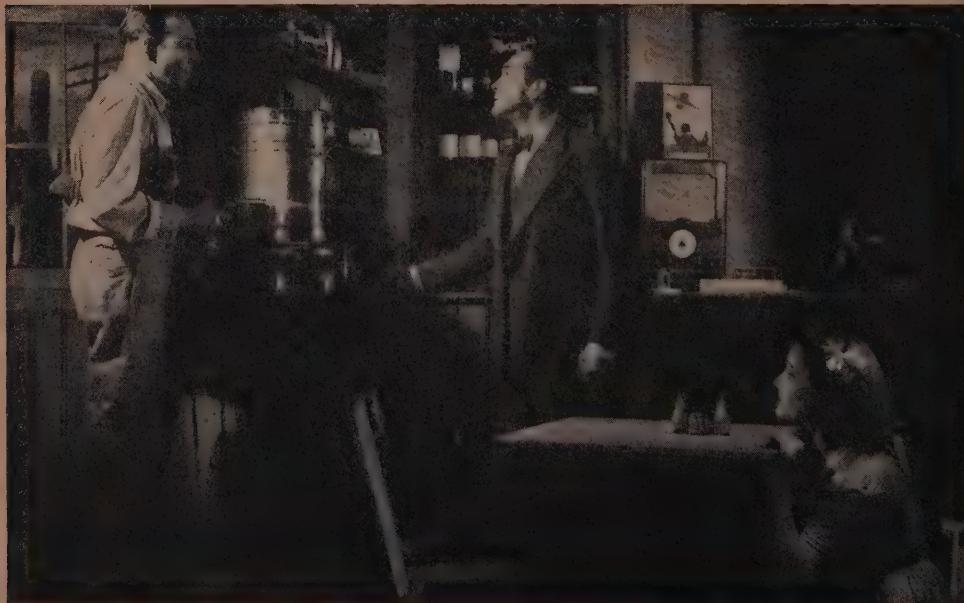
Alan and Gabby, sheltering under the table, discover how deep is their love for each other.

(Below) :

Duke: Do you still want it?

Squier: It makes no matter whether I want it or not. You've got to . . .

The moment before the Duke shoots Alan.





*Gabby*: No—don't worry, Alan. I'm not going to be a God-damned cry-baby about it. . . . I know you died happy . . . Didn't you, Alan? Didn't you?

After the shooting Alan has staggered to the chair and in a few seconds has died, shot through the lung.



*Gramp*: Listen, Gabby . . . here's the funny thing. His Life Insurance for five thousand berries. He made it out to you and it looks regular. Said he wanted you to spend it on a trip to France to see your mother.

The closing moments of the play.

very few seconds left to tell Gabby he has found the reason in life.

Gabby, stunned, but dimly perceiving the truth, whispers once again to herself the Villon lines—

*"Thus in your field my seed of harvestry will thrive—*

*For the fruit is like me that I set—*

*God bids me tend it with good*

*husbandry :*

*This is the end for which we twain are met."*

# OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LEGITIMATE THEATRE

A RECENT SPEECH BY GERTRUDE LAWRENCE

● There is much sound advice for stage aspirants on both sides of the Atlantic in the speech below which Gertrude Lawrence has kindly allowed THEATRE WORLD to print. We hope Miss Lawrence will soon be able to make the hoped-for visit to England. Her long sojourn in America has been a great loss to our theatre, but the British Embassy begged her to remain in the States, her work over there being of great national value, particularly before America entered the war.



**C**OMPETITION to-day is high in any profession, but none quite equals the theatre, which often seems, to those closest to it, as all gamble and no profession. But of course the theatre still offers splendid opportunities, though the percentage of these opportunities may not be as high as it was thirty years ago.

Each year there may be around two hundred plays produced. Perhaps ten per cent. of these will be outstanding successes. Ten per cent. additionally will run long enough to be classified as hits. Perhaps an additional twenty per cent. will run long enough to cover the cost of production, and the rest will either lose money steadily or close rapidly on what has already been lost.

## The Test of Success

Nobody can be sure he or she is a party to a hit until after the play has more than paid its way from the first three to twelve weeks. Beyond that all you can be sure of is that a certain number of plays will run through the whole season, and by the same token, a certain number of stars and supporting players will be able to report that they have had a successful season.

Rarely will a play come along that is robust enough to stand on its own feet, accept changes in leading roles, and hardly ever can they live through a layoff. *Lady in the Dark* was one of the outstanding exceptions. We closed for the summer and it reopened to capacity which has been its box office index ever since.

If this good fortune happened to us, it follows that it could and will happen to others. But the percentage of success in relation to employable legitimate talent is exceedingly small, and for this reason it is unfair to urge everybody with the slightest skill at entertaining others to drop everything and rush to Broadway.

## Hard Work and Talent

No, there still are opportunities in the theatre, but the genius who moves from the nursery to the star's dressing room almost overnight and for keeps, is not known to Broadway to-day, or even to Hollywood for that matter. Success to-day involves long, hard, arduous work, and if there is a certain

spark, in addition to a talent fortified by hard work, not even a bad season will deny such a talent from climbing to the top eventually.

While the legitimate theatre has narrowed its field even in my time, it has, on the other hand, widened its horizons tremendously in new directions. The summer stock or "straw hat" theatre, for instance, has climbed and spread out like a robust ivy plant. You find "straw hats" in places where it's so cold that even summer dresses cannot be worn!

In the old days the summer time was an actor's long, unpaid, lay-off. Now many of them do their best work and gain their greatest returns during these "dog days." Here is a splendid opportunity for new talent to try its wings. Whether one can make the grade or not nobody can say until one has tried. To say a girl cannot succeed because her looks are against her or her legs are too wide in the wrong places is to talk nonsense. Many examples could be cited as proof of this and if it weren't likely to leave me open to the charge of being unkind I'd cite them.

## Belief in Yourself

I don't consider myself, for instance, a raving beauty, but I do not frighten children, and I have learned how to act and feel and sing, and that's all acting is anyway. You simply must have this sort of belief in yourself. However, the line between egotism and confidence is very narrow, and you must know when to suppress one and to express the other. Practise this and you are practising the art of acting. It is all right to be humble in life, but if you are too humble you will never get your name in lights!!

In addition you must know when to be willing to do things for nothing and when to oppose such action on the grounds that it is making you compete against yourself on a price-cutting basis in the only market you have. This is something you must never do if it does not advance your career. It is strictly a vanity performance and bad all around.

When called upon to perform this way I  
*(Continued on page 30)*



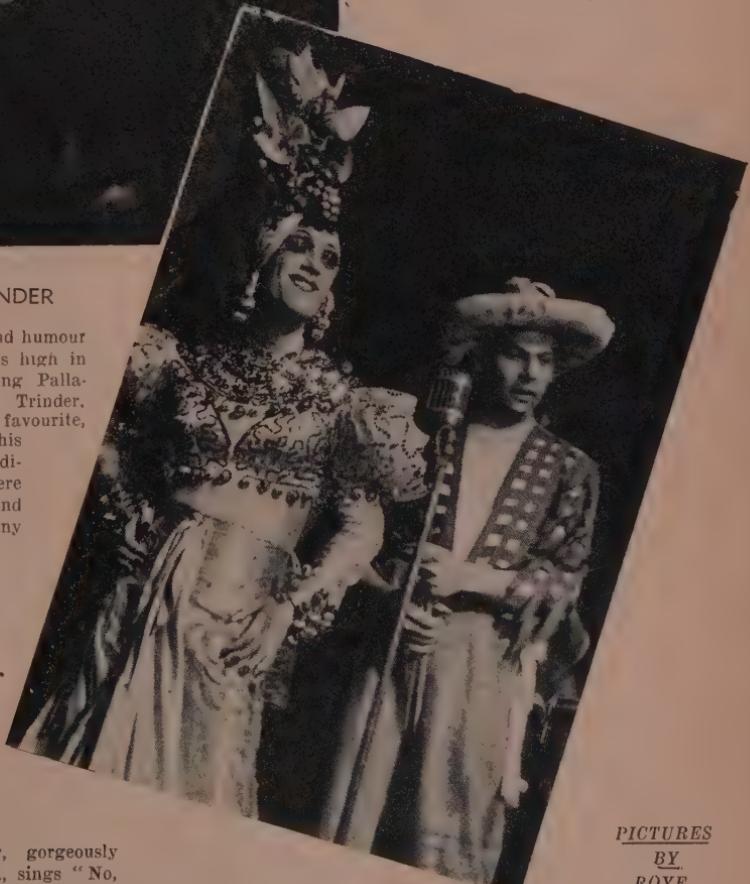
# Best Bib and Tucker

Scenes from the latest George Black revue at the Palladium, produced by Robert Nesbitt, with dances and ensembles by Wendy Toye and orchestrations by Debroy Somers.

## TOMMY TRINDER

(Above) : For colourfulness, variety and humour *Best Bib and Tucker* ranks high in the long list of outstanding Palladium shows. Tommy Trinder, already an established favourite, demonstrates once again his ability to entertain big audiences, and in support there are many excellent turns and as lavish a production as any in Town.

(Right) : Tommy Trinder, gorgeously attired as Carmen Miranda, sings "No, No, No, Columbus" with Edmundo Ross and his band.



PICTURES  
BY  
ROYE

## The Music of America



(Above): The impressive "National Emblem" scene, with the Stars and Stripes everywhere in evidence, and the Statue of Liberty (Joan Richards) as the centrepiece of the revolving stage.

(Right and Above): Two charming studies of the dancers. In the top picture can be glimpsed the silhouetted skyscrapers which are a most effective background in one of the scenes.

Magnificently staged, this sequence pays graceful tribute to our American Allies in song and dance, both old and new, with Bernard Clifton, Tommy Trinder, Mary Naylor, Lamar and Rosita, and the Radio Rangers, etc., in strong support.





## The Jackdaw of Rheims

The pictures at the top of the page give some idea of the lovely dresses and equally charming young ladies who bring glamour to the production. Immediately above, by way of contrast, is a scene from "The Jackdaw of Rheims," which was originally produced in *Brighter London* at the Hippodrome in 1924. Adapted from the Ingoldsby Legends by Basil Macdonald Hastings with music by Herman Finck, this delightful dramatised legend is here revived with great beauty. Joseph Farringdon is The Cardinal, Jack Williams The Abbot and Margaret Roseby The Jackdaw.

**Jackley & Clifford  
Get Into Battle  
Dress**

Undoubtedly one of the funniest and most appreciated turns in *Best Bib and Tucker* is pictured on the left, in which Nat Jackley (the tall one) appears as An Extra in a film studio, Jack Clifford as Another Extra, and Sammy Curtis as a Small Extra. The antics of these three, and particularly of Nat Jackley, who surely cannot have a bone in his body, have to be seen to be believed.



(Below) : A trio of good looks from this brightest of Palladium shows.



# The Post-War Playgoer

will demand  
more from  
the theatre  
says

*Eric Johns:*

**I**N a green and silver Soho studio, just six months before the war, beneath a glamorous picture of the one and only Mistinguett, Freddie Carpenter, who put the dancing into *The Dancing Years*, was hard at work devising new steps and ensembles for what was so soon to prove the crowning triumph of Ivor Novello's career as Drury Lane's most successful actor-author-composer.

## Talking "Shop"

In those days I always felt that Freddie would soar to even loftier heights as a dance producer if he had a little more direct contact with the public. He spent the entire day in his Soho dance studio; in the evening he sat in the stalls admiring and criticising the work of his colleagues in their latest successes and failures; while at lunch and dinner, he was invariably in company of Florence Desmond, Dorothy Dickson, Cicely Courtneidge, or some other theatrical celebrity. He mixed almost exclusively with stage folk, and as usual in such circles, talked shop all day long, and often well into the small hours.

It was vitally interesting shop, of course; as a layman I was always enthralled by the conversion round Freddie's candle-lit dinner table, invariably presided over by his mother, La Belle Jean, who holds that rare secret of carelessly wearing orchids and pearls to perfection. But the fact remains



FREDDIE CARPENTER

that the talk was shop talk and I often felt these stage people should endeavour to seek a closer and more personal contact with those who came to the theatre to appreciate their work.

The war has completed Freddie's education in this respect and now there is little one can tell him about the psychological make-up of any audience. He deserted Soho and entered the R.A.F. as an A.C.2. It meant a big sacrifice for him, but he made it gladly and soon adapted himself to the new life, adopting the attitude that any job worth doing is worth doing well. In a short time he attained officer rank, and is still completely absorbed by his work, despite the fact that it has nothing whatever to do with entertainment.

## Camp Shows for the R.A.F.

In his spare time he has staged several magnificent camp shows with R.A.F. personnel, using the latent talent of young airmen and W.A.A.F.s, who had never acted in their lives before. In gay song and dance sequences Freddie moulded these eager youngsters to his will with such success, and infected them with such enthusiasm that more than one young pilot sacrificed his leave in order to devote extra time to rehearsals and to give really serious study to his part. In no instance was this theatrical activity allowed to encroach upon the more

(Continued overleaf)

serious study of aircraft, navigation, and relocation.

Freddie taught these lads much about the stage, but in their turn they taught him much about problems that will face the post war theatre. If you try to paint a sunset yourself, even if the result is little more than a mediocre daub, you are in a much better position to appreciate the genius of Turner. You know yourself just how difficult was his task and how clever he has been in capturing the magic effects of light, shade, and colour. Similarly, now that Freddie's young men have tried their hand at a song and dance routine their perceptions and critical faculties are going to be all the keener when they attend the theatre as playgoers in the future.

### Only the Best Will Do

None of these lads has any desire to turn professional or to consider the stage as a career after the war. Most of them have a pretty good estimate of their own limitations, but for all that, they have first hand, if not first rate, knowledge of things on the other side of the footlights and it is a point which the professional theatre will have to bear in mind. These men will go back home after the war as confirmed theatregoers and will expect to be offered entertainment of a consistently high quality.

Gone are the days when musical shows could be slung together in any haphazard fashion and sent on the road to make money for a year. If the theatre is to hold its own after the war it will have to face the fact that only the best is good enough, even in remote and sordid industrial centres where idle sophistication is an unknown quantity in the daily life of the people.

It seems that managers are already aware of this trend in the evolution of playgoing, for here and now, with the war at its height, we can see such magnificent productions as *Watch on the Rhine*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Fine and Dandy*, upon which endless care has been lavished and which would have been smash hits in any pre-war year.

The public, too, are just as keen on play-going and even sufficiently interested in the stage to discover and establish new stars. Pamela Brown has created a sensation by her sensitive performance in *Claudia*, and

there are high hopes that she will carry on the great tradition of Thorndikes and Vandbrughs. On the musical stage the public has acclaimed Carol Raye, an exquisitely dainty figure who sets us thinking of the old days when we worshipped June in *Fun of the Fayre* and Anna Neagle in *Stand Up and Sing*, before she ever dreamt about going into films. These two fine artists had not been heard of in the West End before the war, but now much is expected of them. We feel that they have great nights in store for us, and the position that they have won in these changing times just goes to prove that the war, far from having killed, has not even stunned the theatre.

The scripts of musical plays will have to reach a fairly high standard in future. Musicals that merely appeal to the eye, with endless processions of glamorously undressed show girls, soon pall. As great nations go into decline their entertainments tend to appeal more and more to the eye and less to the intellect, such as the bullring dramas of Alfonso's Madrid and the Colosseum Spectacles of Imperial Rome where 87,000 people used to cheer luckless gladiators to their gory death.

### Post-War Theatre Plan

Far from being in decline, our own nation is at the very height of its power and glory, fighting for freedom, social reform and a better world for all. The average men and women of such a nation are far from nits, and managers who think they are going to make a fortune by offering them 100 per cent. leg shows are soon going to find they have sadly underestimated the intelligence of the man in the street.

What about a Post-War Theatre Plan in order to prevent unsuccessful and unnecessary seasons of trial-and-error after the war?

The Golden Age we are promised by the Beveridge Plan will need a very fine theatre if, as in the past, the stage is to be a true reflection of contemporary life. Managers should welcome the return of artists like Freddie Carpenter, coming back from the Forces with a first hand knowledge of those masses who are going to keep the theatres open and flourishing in the years to come.

Perhaps at long last we are on the point of solving that eternal question of what the public wants.

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By our  
American  
Correspondent

E.  
**MAWBY  
GREEN**

Notable first production of the Theatre Guild's twenty-fifth season was Philip Barry's *Without Love*. (Right) : Katharine Hepburn and Elliott Nugent in a scene from the play, which is fully reviewed below.

PICTURE BY VANDAMM



## Echoes from Broadway

THE Theatre Guild has commenced its twenty-fifth season in a conscious and encouraging fashion. With no productions of the three already inching flourishing at the box-office, it looks like the Guild is due to prosper and over a lot of its past prestige. First to arrive was Philip Barry's *Without Love*, which has been experimenting on the board for a long time and was once booked for Broadway as a late Spring offering. But Katharine Hepburn had to hop to Hollywood to dispose of a film obligation, so everything was suspended until the Fall. It was Philip Barry, of course, who wrote *The Philadelphia Story*, which the Guild produced in 1939 with the exciting Miss Hepburn, so this same successful formula has been tried again in *Without Love*. In *The Philadelphia Story*, Miss Hepburn just what Mr. Barry's comedy needed

to put it over. In *Without Love*, Miss Hepburn is not able to turn the trick so neatly, for Mr. Barry has not written as scintillating a vehicle. When he commenced working on it, Pearl Harbour had not happened, and looking for an International angle he resorted to that old argument of Irish neutrality. Meanwhile, American troops have been landed in Ireland, and to-day's headlines eclipse anything politically that might have seemed of vital importance then, emanating from Eire. Instead of looking round for a new twist, Mr. Barry stuck as stubbornly as the Irish to his old ideas, which deprives *Without Love* of being the superb comedy it might have been, as is evidenced in Mr. Barry's scenes confined solely to love and romance.

Miss Hepburn is a wealthy Washington widow of strict New England notions.

(Continued overleaf)

Since the tragic death of her young husband, she has lost all desire for love and life with anybody else. Elliott Nugent is a young American, prominent in politics and back from Europe with the Irish situation practically solved. He has loved lightly and more freely than Miss Hepburn, but their minds are mated so they decide on a marriage without love. By the end of Act 2, Miss Hepburn is confessing her love for Mr. Nugent and caught in the jaws of jealousy. Act 3 and the mental attraction is supplanted by the physical, they are at peace with each other, but Eire is still gnawing at neutrality.

Miss Hepburn looks stunning in a crop of new clothes by Valentina. She continues to be a personality of glamour and enormous appeal. She speaks in that monotonous drawl which, fortunately can be as fascinating as it is flat. Whether on stage or screen, there is a certain magnetism about Miss Hepburn it is difficult to escape, and she fits perfectly the mood of Mr. Barry's comedy.

*Without Love* has been produced in the Guild's usual superior style, and despite the Irish disturbances injected into the comedy, it is a production to be seen and enjoyed. It is not Mr. Barry's best effort, but it is delightful theatre and in this respect deserving of more acclaim than the critics afforded it. However, Miss Hepburn has a large following, and there have been standees since opening night, so there seems little to worry about at present.

THE Guild's second production was *Mr. Sycamore*, described on the programme as The Saga of John Gwilt in eight verses, by Ketti Frings, based on a story by Robert Ayre. Ketti Frings is known in Hollywood as the author of *Hold Back the Dawn*. *Mr. Sycamore* will not bring her the same success on Broadway, but it is an interesting stage attempt and with everybody so movie-minded in Hollywood, we wonder how Mrs. Frings found the courage to embark on a fantasy as fabulous as *Mr. Sycamore*.

John Gwilt (Stuart Erwin) is the postman in the small town of Smeed. Weary of the petty peculiarities of small town life, he remembers the legend of Philemon and Baucis, digs a hole in his backyard, takes off his shoes and socks, and plants himself in the hole, hoping soon to become a tree. Lilian Gish, his affectionate wife, is not willing to dig in with him, but is concerned about his catching cold while waiting to sprout, and while not wholly approving of the experiment, continues to serve him his meals and such in face of ridicule from wide-eyed town folk. Eventually he does take root and by the end of the play is a tall spreading sycamore, where his wife and friends bask in the shade of his branches,

giving an occasional shake of his trunk in appreciation of a fond remark.

It is a curiously amusing play. Perhaps a bit too fantastic to accept with complete comfort, but the humour is fresh and fertile and with the splendid acting and staging it received, *Mr. Sycamore* deserved a better fate than nineteen performances. We admire the Guild for putting it on, and it is good to see this experimental note creeping back into their make-up.

FOR their third offering, the Guild in association with The Playwrights' Company, presented Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in *The Pirate*, by S. N. Behrman, based on an idea in a play by Ludwig Fulda. The Lunts have been on tour for two seasons in their Broadway success *There Shall Be No Night*, by Robert E. Sherwood. After so long an absence, it was quite an event to welcome them back in a production as gay and colourful as *The Pirate*. It is a grand show and a merry a lark as the Lunts have indulged in for some time.

Not much to the story, and not Mr. Behrman's most brilliant piece of playwriting, but it has some truly magnificent moments both by Mr. Behrman and the Lunts. And when Mr. Behrman is not touching top form, you can bet the Lunts are, so there is little to do but praise *The Pirate*. Toss Miss Fontanne a line that strikes her fancy and she will twirl around and invest it with magic. This lovely lady of the stage has never seemed in better form. She is for this season, and doubtless many more to come, Manuela, wife of the rich and stodgy merchant Pedro Vargas (Alan Reed), who reads with rapture the romantic tales of Esmeralda, the pirate. Comes to town, with appropriate fanfare and exotic music, the strolling player and his shaking Serafin (Alfred Lunt), and his troupe, all set to perform for the town and garner a meal before proceeding elsewhere. Serafin meets Manuela; is struck by her charms and would win her for himself. He discovers her fascination for Esmeralda, and would have her believe his boasts that he is the hero of her dreams, and through some special trick of his own gets Manuela's husband to back up this hoax. The trick being he has recognised her husband as being the real Esmeraldo, who is wanted by the authorities and finally captured. Of course, Serafin gets Manuela, but not before he has exhibited his prowess as a magician, pulling rabbits out of hats and practise mesmericism on Manuela with telling result. The locale is the West Indies, early in the 19th century.

*The Pirate* is no more than a frivolous frolic, designed to bring out the best in the Lunts, and embroidered with some of the most gorgeous costumes seen in years,



Picture by Vandamm

The Lunts have scored another big success in *The Pirate*, the new S. N. Behrman comedy, which production and stars, our American Correspondent thinks, would greatly please the West End. It goes without saying that another visit from America's most famous and irresistible stage partners would be a major theatrical event over here. Above is a colourful scene from this gay show.

Miles White, and equally colourful settings to match, by Lemuel Ayers. Herbert Kingsley composed the background music and Felicia Sorel conceived the dances. The production was staged by Mr. Lunt and John C. Wilson. Watching this magnificently produced extravaganza with its riot of colour and revelry by the Lunts, you get the feeling there is nothing wrong with the theatre when it falls in the right hands. And what a show this would be to take to London to dispel the gloom of all those blackouts! It is as gay and gorgeous a production as you are likely to see for years to come, and who would be more welcome in the West End than Miss Fontanne and Mr. Lunt? We have an idea Mr. Lunt and Mr. Wilson had the same thought in mind when they staged it, for there is nothing in *The Pirate* that London can't take with the same measure of enthusiasm as New York.

**M**EANWHILE, Gilbert Miller has given us a production of Norman Armstrong's London success *Lifeline*, which was too weak in suspense to keep

afloat on Broadway beyond eight performances. Undaunted, Mr. Miller is now rehearsing Terence Rattigan's *Flare Path*, with Alec Guinness in one of the principal parts, due here December 23rd. David Silberman and L. Daniel Blank launched a new edition of Karel Capek's *R.U.R.*, English version by Paul Selver, but this revival of the robots collapsed after four performances. New York also has a big hit in Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, starring Tallulah Bankhead, Fredric March and Florence Eldridge, presented by Michael Myerberg, which has taken Broadway by storm, for and against, and will be discussed more fully next month; also Herman Shumlin's production of *The Great Big Doorstep*, a new comedy by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, from the novel of E. P. O'Donnell, with Dorothy Gish and Louis Calhern. For three days we had the Gish Sisters back on Broadway at the same time: Lilian Gish in *Mr. Sycamore* and Dorothy Gish in *The Great Big Doorstep*, both giving excellent performances, too—Dorothy still is.

## Opportunities To-Day . . .

(Continued from page 20)

try to effect a fair trade. I have performed for charities and anybody wanting me to further their pet charity must contribute to mine. Thus I keep the American Branch of E.N.S.A., of which I have been president since the beginning of the war, a going concern.

In England "E.N.S.A.", which initially stand for the Entertainment National Services Association, is officially tied in with the War Department. "E.N.S.A." in England, with Basil Dean at the head of it, provides entertainment for united service men and war workers under the approval of the British Government.

Over here we are completely a voluntary organisation and do everything and anything from making transcriptions to entertain the Coast Guard at Panama to singing to British and American merchant marines who happen to be in New York waiting for their ships to sail into the dangerous waters which are the life-line between Great Britain and America.

### A Trouper's Training

Bolstering the morale of these men and relieving tension with laughs is part of a good trouper's training. If you haven't even a desire to do these things you may succeed as a war profiteer, but you will certainly not succeed as an actor or actress. You couldn't find a more appreciative audience, and, at the present time when so many men are off in training camps, it means more and more entertainment will have to be brought to them or they will die of boredom. Who is to bring them this entertainment if not entertainers? And if you think you can entertain, what is holding you back? And don't think you can fool the Service men, they know what's genuine and what's fake.

The longest way round used to be considered the sweetest way home, according to an old song, and to-day the way to Broadway may well be through the circuitous route of a string of army training camps. Yes, the more I think of it the more I am convinced that the girl or boy seeking opportunities in the theatre should hitch a ride to New York and join a company of modern troubadours who are heading for an army camp or factory and rehearsing routines that will warm the cockles of their hearts, and put a "sock" into the production benches.



Paul Tanqueray.

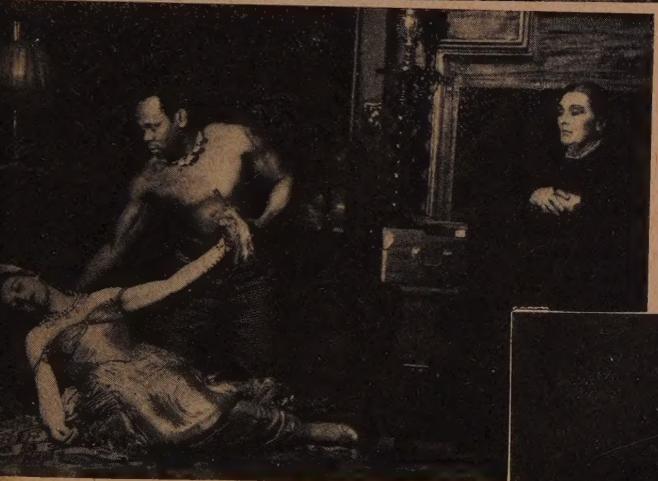
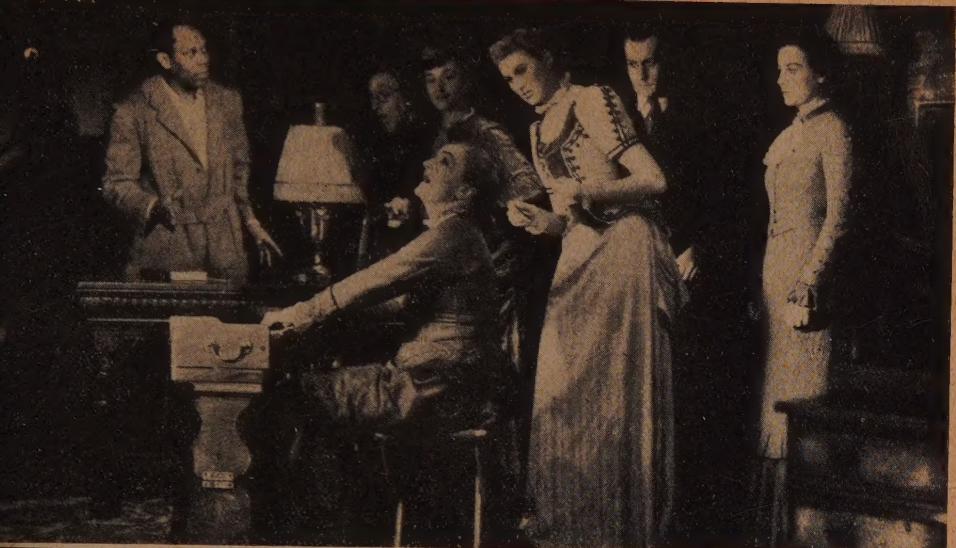
A charming study of ROMA BEAUMONT, starring in Ivor Novello's *The Dancing Years*, now in its second "edition" at the Adelphi—after being seen, since its first production at Drury Lane in March, 1939, by over a million-and-a-half people.



Fred Daniels.

NORA SWINBURNE who supports Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge in *Full Swing*, approaching its anniversary performance at the Palace Theatre.

*Belinda Swinburne*



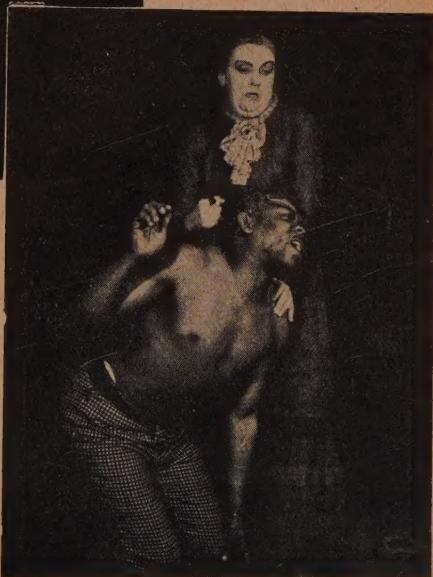
(Above) :  
The sinister ex-missionary looks on while Sabbath, her  
naïve convert, carries the body of Roberta Justen  
through the secret panel.

## The House of Jeffreys" AT THE PLAYHOUSE

(Right) : Georgina Jeffreys stabs the faithful Sabbath  
and lapses into gibbering insanity. A scene at the  
end of the play, after smoke issuing from the secret  
kery chimney leads to the discovery of the cannibal  
es Georgina has been practising by the light of the  
full moon.

Scenes from Russell Thorndike's macabre play, which marks the welcome return of Dame Sybil Thorndike to the West End.

Above: Georgina Jeffreys plays the harmonium with a fanaticism that startles the onlookers. L-R: Robert Adams as Sabbath, Russell Thorndike as Mr. Sharp, Gwendolyn Gray as Roberta Justen, Sybil Thorndike as Miss Jeffreys, Rosemary Scott as Jane Poole, Arthur Pusey as Theodore Rudd and Judith Nelmes as Miss Seaton.



# AMATEUR STAGE

Notes  
and Topics

**M**R. IVOR THOMAS, M.P., has stated that his motion for the war-time relaxation of the ban on Sunday opening of the theatres found its way to the Order Paper because the Lord's Day Observance Society threatened to bring proceedings if a society of amateurs in his constituency produced for charity a play by A. A. Milne.

In view of this statement, it may be well to point out here that so far as the amateur stage generally is concerned, any demand for facilities to stage full dress plays on a Sunday must have a purely temporary, wartime foundation. Normally, in peace-time; there is no real demand for Sunday playing by the amateur stage.

To-day, however, it may well be that with all members of the community working harder and with little spare time, the Sunday evening is the only one of the week when a cast can be sure of the time to play together. The further factor no doubt operates that in many localities on a Sunday night service groups are yearning for organised entertainment.

If these factors are well-founded, then amateurs will endorse this further comment by Mr. Thomas: "May I also point out that the procedure, taking place under a Defence Regulation, would be limited strictly to the duration of the war and a short time afterwards? It is dictated largely by the uprooting of troops and civilians from their homes, and is designed to put the living theatre on the same basis as other forms of entertainment."

**A**LITTLE THEATRE, says Mr. F. Sladen-Smith, is the fine flower of the amateur movement. It is the place where the ideals and aspirations of the enthusiasts who founded this great movement can best come to fruition. In the north can be found many examples of a stimulating theatrical adventure.

Included in those examples are the Un-named Society, Manchester (Mr. Sladen-Smith's group); Altringham Garrick, Stockport Garrick; Rochdale Curtain Theatre; Huddersfield Thespians; Ilkley Players; Bradford Civic Playhouse; Newcastle Peoples' Theatre; Penrith Players.

It is probably true that the little theatre movement flourishes more in the north than in the south. If this is true, what is the reason? There was a slight tendency before the war for southern drama groups to achieve a little theatre of their own; but the north has an enormous start of the southerners.

To ascertain how the south stands to-day, will little theatres still in existence notify this journal? Nine organisations are quoted above in the northern examples—can the

south muster nine? No doubt Bourne mouth Little Theatre can head the list.

**M**AKING its first London appearance since the air attack of September, 1940 when all properties and costumes were destroyed, the Carl Rosa Opera Company opened a season at the Winter Garden Theatre at the end of January. Its repertoire includes nine of the favourite operas which have earned record success for the company in the provinces since last March.

The continued popularity of these old grand operas raises the interesting speculation as to amateur taste after the war. Will there still be a big demand for period pieces like *Florodora*, *Quaker Girl* and so many more? One or two professional managements are nursing comparatively recent West End successes for amateurs—in one case high hopes are entertained of a record breaker with amateurs. Beyond the safe assumption that Gilbert and Sullivan is assured of its amateur market, there is much room for surprise. The musical side of the amateur stage has a lot of ground to gain to achieve a comparable level with the best of their dramatic brethren.

(Continued opposite)

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## Amateur Stage (*Continued*)

ON Saturday, January 23rd, the third drama festival of the war opened at Toynbee Hall Theatre. The festival has on this occasion attracted some 30 entries from a much wider field. The programme, which covers ten successive Saturday afternoons, includes very interesting groups, while the plays range from Shakespeare through Maeterlinck and Synge to contemporary drama. Mr. Maxwell Wray who assisted in launching the first Toynbee Drama Festival just over a year ago again adjudicates, and Mr. Neil Porter, of the R.A.D.A., will criticise the work of the four finalists on March 27th. A most gratifying feature of the festival is the keenness of the players to see the work of other groups and to profit from the guidance offered in the adjudications. They regard the performances as a means of affording and obtaining entertainment and instruction; as a result the purely competitive spirit is entirely absent, which is, of course, as it ought to be.

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### Miscellaneous Announcements

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## Why I Love The Theatre

YOU may have noticed the freshness and spontaneity of Lesley Osmond, principal girl in *Mother Goose* at the Coliseum. Though Miss Osmond made quite a name for herself at the Windmill (and I remember a performance of great promise she gave more recently at the Whitehall), this is really the biggest thing she has done to date, and it is, perhaps small wonder the world looks bright to this little girl who has heaps of personality and a way of thinking things out for herself.

I asked her why she loved the theatre and this was her reply: "Why do I love the theatre? It is difficult to say; there are so many reasons, yet I love it apart from any of them.

"No—I don't think it is the glamour, the excitement or the applause: when I go to the theatre I don't feel I am going to work. I am going to my home, to a place where I belong.

"I get a very happy important feeling each day now when I turn down St. Martin's Lane and see the huge globe on top of the Coliseum.

"There it is," I say to myself, "my theatre!" I think of the hundreds who will be going to 'my' theatre each day—some because they are depressed and want to forget their troubles, some to celebrate a special occasion.

"We shall all in that theatre be sharing those things which are universal. Yes—I believe it is just this that I love; sharing the music and laughter; being in a show that is part of a life which has nothing to do with business or economics; that expresses the things we all understand regardless of our age, nationality or our bank balance.

"Of course it isn't 'my' theatre—but on our side of the curtain we all say that to ourselves if not to any one else, from the call boy to the stars!"

\* \* \* \*

Talking of *Mother Goose* reminds me of the restaurant of a West End hotel which saw quite a poignant little moment one evening over the holidays.

Alys Sherry, Fairy Queen at the Coliseum, arrived after the performance and ordered a meal.

The first dish brought, there came suddenly, from a nearby table, the cry of a little boy.

He was with his father and mother—and they had obviously just come from the Coliseum, too.

They tried to pacify him—but they just couldn't.

"Look—there's the Fairy—and she's eating!" he blurted out between one lot of tears and the next.

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